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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETTC](#) [EPET](#) [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [PL](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: POLAND/IRAN: DEPUTY PM OPPOSES POLISH INVESTMENT
IN IRANIAN FIELD

REF: A. WARSAW 732
[1](#)B. WARSAW 806
[1](#)C. WARSAW 845

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Pamela Quanrud for reasons:
1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) In a meeting August 6 with Charge, Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Waldemar Pawlak expressed in clear terms his opposition to Polish state-owned gas company PGNiG's discussed \$2 billion investment in Iran's Lavan gas field. He said he would express his opposition to the project in the Council of Ministers and to Treasury Minister Grad, who exercises statutory control over state-owned enterprises. Pawlak noted that the investment would be bad politics for Poland. He also expressed disbelief that PGNiG, a state-controlled company under GoP-appointed management, continued to pursue a holdover project from the previous government's efforts to expand imports of non-Russian gas.

[1](#)2. (C) Pawlak articulated a different strategy for defending Poland from dependence on Russian-controlled gas. His approach would exploit Poland's large coal reserves as a source of gas-replacing electricity and as a new source of gas itself, through coal-bed methane extraction and coal gasification. This strategy, he asserted, would not only undermine Russian influence based on gas supplies, it would be cheaper than importing Russian or Iranian gas.

Comment: Can He Make it Stick?

[1](#)3. (C) Pawlak does not clearly have the ability to block PGNiG's plans. The GoP's two coalition partners - Prime Minister Tusk's Civic Platform (PO) and the junior, Pawlak-led Polish People's Party (PSL) - have struggled for control over energy policy (Ref A) since the government's formation, thus far inconclusively. Nonetheless, Pawlak's opposition to a deal with Iran is a welcome departure (see refs B and C) that we will seek to build upon.
QUANRUD